

LESLEY WHEELER

Laggard

What a stupid way
to approach a cherry
blossom—fearing how spring
blows away. This April

our son drew rain
in rapid gray and
purple dashes. Our daughter
mailed a lopped honey

ponytail to some charity.
Now she runs light.
On the trail or
keyboard my spouse glints

and goes like sunset
in the mountains while
his blue shadow-wife
slowly lengthens behind him.

He laughs. His first
gift to me, years
ago: news that terror
is funny. We keep

walking past a drowned
young green snake, curled
in a spiral, beside
the yellow creek, all

roiled up by night's
forked storms. He always
walks with me, sprinting
only on his own

time, though the children
speed off all unburdened.
*Ah, he admits, I
slept through the thunder.*